

130.
A
S E R M O N,
OCCASIONED
BY THE DEATH OF
MRS. ELIZABETH TAYLOR,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
OCTOBER 22, 1793,
IN THE 49TH YEAR OF HER AGE,
WITH A
SHORT ACCOUNT
O F
H E R L I F E,
AND A
DESCRIPTION OF HER CHARACTER.

BY D. TAYLOR. *H*

Taken in Short Hand by Mr. WILLIAM RAMSEY; altered and enlarged by the AUTHOR; published as a Testimony of grateful Respect to the Memory of the deceased; and earnestly recommended to her Nine surviving Children, and to her numerous Friends, in Town and Country.

Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord.

Rev. xiv. 13.

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W. E. LITTLE



SHOULDER

OF THE

DEPARTMENT OF THE

ANTHROPOLOGY

It is a pleasure to inform you that the
specimen of the human skull
which you have deposited in the
British Museum is now in the
possession of the Department of
Anthropology.

Yours faithfully,
W. E. LITTLE

W. E. LITTLE
DEPARTMENT OF THE
ANTHROPOLOGY
BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT may reasonably be supposed, that, as it is not common for a minister to preach the Funeral Sermon for his wife, the reader will enquire why the author of the following discourse should deviate from the method usual on such occasions. It is apprehended that an apology may be proper; and that the following is a sufficient one. The Friday morning after my wife departed this life, I wrote to a minister for whom I have a great regard, expressing my earnest wishes and request, that he would perform this office of friendship, and in the strongest language I could make use of, entreated that he would not disappoint us. In full confidence that we should be favoured with his compliance, I desired the congregation might be informed of it, the following Lord's day. But to my surprise and grief, I received a refusal from my friend, on the Monday morning, arising from an unreasonable timidity, too natural to him as a preacher. We afterwards wrote twice to this minister; and used every argument we could think of, to obtain the favour requested. On the following Friday, in the morning, we received a final refusal, on account of his apprehended insufficiency for such a work.

The Sermon was to be preached on the following Lord's day. We took some pains to procure another minister, but were not able to succeed. It happened to be the Lord's day on which dissenting ministers in general, so far as I am acquainted, administer the Lord's Supper. They were therefore under the necessity of being at their respective places. Thus peculiarly circumstanced, and the time being so short, I thought it proper to request, on the Saturday afternoon, the advice of our six deacons. On a view of circumstances, they unanimously advised me to endeavour to deliver the discourse myself. To this advice I yielded, reduced to the most afflictive necessity that I have ever known as a minister, since my call to that sacred and most important office. I only add, that as the discourse was delivered in a very discomposed state of mind, and has been written under great depression of spirits, and with very many interruptions, such as few are capable of judging of, very little regard has been paid, either to style or composition. If the reading of it should, through the Divine blessing, leave any lasting serious impressions on the minds of my children, or of any others, I shall rejoice; and wish to give the glory to the Author of all good, to whom it is eternally due.



A SERMON, &c.

WHENEVER I address you, my friends, on sacred subjects, you have probably much to excuse. But you will particularly have many things to excuse on this occasion. Presuming, however, on your patience and candour, I recommend to your serious attention, a favourite text of my late dear wife; on which she seemed to live, and in which, so far as the weakness of her capacities would admit, she appeared, to the end of life, to rejoice. I therefore requested the minister whom you this day expected, if not disagreeable to himself, to make it the subject of his discourse.

What particularly endears the passage to me, is the support which it gave to my dear deceased partner, in a feeble and trying moment, during her last illness. Being at that time very low, I assisted her in lying down in bed, by the fatigue of which, her breath and life were almost gone. After a little time, however, she was able to speak. Her first

words were, " O, this is hard work ; but this God
 " ~~is our God for ever and ever, and will be our~~
 " guide even unto death." Though very feeble,
 she uttered these words with an energy which con-
 vinced me that they came from her heart. On this
 account I determined, that, if I should survive her,
 this passage, unless she proposed another, should be
 the text for her Funeral Sermon.

Though you are disappointed, as to the minister
 expected, I beg leave, under many disadvantages,
 to recommend these encouraging words as the sub-
 ject of your present meditation. They are in
 Psalm xlviii. 14.

*This God is our God, for ever and ever ; he will be
 our guide even unto death.*

The occasion on which this psalm was composed
 is not so certain as to enable us to pronounce posi-
 tively concerning it. But on comparing the devo-
 tional with the historical parts of the Old Testa-
 ment, it appears most natural to suppose, that it
 was penned in consequence of that wonderful de-
 liverance which God had wrought for his people,
 recorded in the twentieth chapter of the second
 book of Chronicles.

An alarming combination had taken place against
 good king Jehoshaphat. " The children of Moab,
 " and the children of Ammon, with their auxilia-
 " ries, came against him to battle." † Jehoshaphat,
 informed of their design, " proclaimed a fast through-

† 2 Chron. xx. 1.

out all Judah; and Judah gathered themselves
 "together, to ask help of the Lord; even out of
 "all the cities of Judah, they came to seek the
 "Lord."

On this occasion, the good king "stood in the
 "congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the
 "house of the Lord," and offered up a most solemn
 address to Heaven, which I think none of you can
 read without edification. At the conclusion of the
 king's prayer, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon
 "Jahaziel, the son of Zechariah," and he, in the
 most encouraging manner, addressed the king and
 the people. Animated by this address of Jahaziel,
 "they rose early in the morning, and went forth
 "into the wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went
 "forth, the pious monarch stood and said; Believe
 "in the Lord your God, so shall you be establish-
 "ed; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."
 They went out, singing praises to the Lord; and
 "the children of Ammon and Moab stood up
 "against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly
 "to slay and destroy them; and when they had
 "made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they
 "one helped to destroy another." So that the
 enemies of Judah were "dead bodies, fallen to
 "the earth, and none escaped;" and Jehoshaphat
 and his people had only to "take away the spoil"
 which was so abundant, that they were three days
 in gathering it. On the fourth day they assembled,
 "and blessed the Lord; and came to Jerusalem
 "with

“ with psalteries, and harps, and trumpets, unto the
“ house of the Lord.

To celebrate this wonderful deliverance, the psalm before us was probably composed, by, or for the sons of Korah; in which, having mentioned several of the perfections, and the providence of God, the words of our text conclude the sacred song. *This God is our God, for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.* This God, who is “ great and greatly to be praised, the great King; “ this God, who is known as a refuge in the palaces “ of Zion; before whom the assembled and com- “ bined kings marvelled, were troubled, and hasted “ away; were seized with fear, and pain as of a “ woman in travail.—*This God, who breaketh the “ ships of Tarshish with an east-wind; who will “ establish Zion for ever; whose praise is as his “ name to the ends of the earth; whose right “ hand is full of righteousness; This God is our “ God, for ever and ever; he will be our guide “ even unto death.”*

On these words, I make the following obvious remarks.

I. That under every dispensation of religion, and in every age, it has been the consolation of good men to have an interest in God, to have some evidence of it, and to place all their confidence in that God in whom they are interested. By reading the Old Testament, you will continually find that this was the triumph of the saints. They did not boast of their riches, their worldly digni-

ty, or their own righteousness; but, conscious of the vanity of all earthly good, and the imperfections of all human performances, it was their felicity and their glory to be interested in Him whose "mercy is everlasting, and whose truth endureth from generation to generation."

Under the New Testament dispensation, all true believers have more abundant encouragement to confide and to rejoice in God as their God and portion for ever and ever. "Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel." There the glories, the awful glories of an eternal world, and the compassionate regard of our Heavenly Father to all his children, appear to the greatest advantage. There we have the exceeding great and precious promises to encourage and animate, the way to enjoy the promised blessings, and the characters of those who are interested in them, all placed before our eyes in the clearest and fullest light. Every gospel believer, therefore, has more clear evidence of his interest in the Father of Mercies, than the former dispensation could furnish; and more abundant encouragement and support in the contemplation of a holy, wise, and gracious God as his portion. I beg leave, therefore, to consider the passage before us as expressing the confidence of a true believer in Jesus Christ.

II. The great concern of man is to have an interest in God, as his God and portion; and to know that

that he is interested in him. If God be not our God, what have we that is worth the enjoyment? What is there that can make us happy in life or death? What is there, without this, that can secure our comfort, our peace, or our safety, amidst the toils and pains, the sins and temptations, of the present life? Every considerate man will answer, there is *nothing*. If God be not our God, what are all the riches possessed by men? "Riches make themselves wings, and fly away, as an eagle towards heaven."—"Riches profit not in the day of wrath." What is all the dignity to which mortals were ever advanced? It is all a puff of noisy breath; mere empty air; "vanity and vexation of spirit." You may fare sumptuously, and be exalted to day, to the highest pinnacle of honour, and to-morrow you may be lifting up your eyes in hell, being in torment, and reduced to the painful, mortifying necessity of craving, in vain, a drop of water to cool your scorched tongue.† My dear friends, excuse me in the freedom of asking, what will all the dignity and honour to which you may have been exalted in this world, do for you, in that place of inexpressible and everlasting torment?

Supposing you could enjoy all the pleasures of life, what would these do for you? Who ever pursued these to a greater extent than Solomon? And

† Luke xii. 24.

What are his views, at last, of this pursuit? "This also is vanity." * Sooner or later, you will be brought to the same conclusion. Alas! my brethren! a person who lives in the pursuit of carnal pleasures is "dead while he lives." † And what will the end be? Forgive me if I adopt the address of the prophet to the virgin of Babylon "Hear thou this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly;—let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble: the fire shall burn them: they shall not be able to deliver themselves from the power of the flame." ‡

If we had all the human learning that ever was acquired by mortals, valuable as learning is, we should be fully convinced in the end, that if we have not the knowledge of God as our God, we are but learned fools; and shall acknowledge either to our everlasting confusion, or to our eternal consolation, that "the fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." || In a word; whatever we enjoy, if God be not our God, we enjoy nothing that can make us truly happy; and if we have this portion, we are truly happy, whatever we want besides. Happy are those people only, who have the God of Jacob

* Eccles. ii. 12,—23. † 1 Tim. v. 6. ‡ Isa. xlvii. 8, 13, 14.

|| Job. xxviii. 28. Psa. cxi. 10.

for their help; happy, transcendently, supremely, and eternally happy are they whose hope is in the Lord their God. * O let every one in this assembly, hear the word of him who cannot mistake. "Thus saith the Lord: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches, But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." †

It was further observed that it is the great concern of man to *know* that he has an interest in God. For of what use can our faith or hope be, if we have not the *knowledge* of them? Indeed it is little less than a contradiction in terms, to suppose that a person can be possessed of either, without being able to know that he is possessed of them. An unknown religion, in any part of it, seems to be no religion at all. And what a poor gloomy creature would a true Christian be, not having the evidence that he is such! Without the evidence of the safety and happiness of our condition how could our spirits be supported, our gratitude excited; or our minds comforted in a thousand distressing cases?

The possibility, and the certainty of this knowledge of our condition, are manifest from various

* Psa. cxlvi. 5.

† Jer. ix. 23, 24.

considerations. Two or three of which I beg leave briefly to mention.

First, The scriptures continually address different characters of men. The saint, the sinner, the wicked, the righteous; those who fear God, and who do not fear him; who love, and who do not love him; who trust in him, and do not trust in him; who love, and do not love the Lord Jesus Christ; and so on. No man can attentively read the bible without observing this. Now of what use can it be to make these distinctions, or to address these different characters, if we cannot know our own condition; if we cannot say with evidence, we are of such a character, and such a passage is addressed to us?

Secondly, A great part of the scripture cannot answer the purpose for which it was evidently given, nor, indeed, any valuable purpose at all, unless the readers of it can know their own condition. Promises are made to those of one character; threatenings are denounced against those of another. Multitudes of duties and directions belong to persons of particular characters, marked in the passages where those duties, directions, and threatenings lie. Nor is this the case in a few select passages only; but it is the common method of the sacred writers to speak in this manner. We might adduce instances almost innumerable, if necessary, or if this were a place to enlarge upon the subject. But no attentive reader can be at a loss to

B

observe

observe that this method of address is common throughout the bible. Now all these passages, indeed a great part of the bible, would be useless, if the readers could not know whether they bear the characters of the persons to whom they are addressed, because they, in that case, could not take the portion which belongs to them, as the Author of scripture evidently intended.

Thirdly, We may add, that it would reflect on the wisdom of the great Author of scripture, who evidently supposes that the readers know, or may know their own character and condition, if this were not to be known. And shall we impute folly to the Holy One of Israel? God forbid!

Fourthly, The exhortations to self-examination would be improper, because of no use, if men could not determine what is their spiritual condition. The language in which the apostle expresses himself on this head, deserves particular attention. He not only calls us to *examine*, but to *prove* our own selves.* *Proof* must be by evidence; and the effect of *proof* is *conviction*; which gives the mind assurance. If men could not prove their own selves, they would not be exhorted to it; and if they can prove their own selves, they can certainly know what is their condition. He adds "Know ye not your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" But what would this be to the pur-

* 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

pose, if men cannot know whether Jesus Christ is in them, and whether they are reprobates or not?

Fifthly, The constant language of the saints, both in the Old and New Testament is such as plainly proves that they did know their interest in God, and their happy relation to him. The language of the text might be considered as a specimen; and every attentive reader must observe that it agrees with the current language of the saints in every part of scripture respecting their state, their interest in God, and their title to heaven. All they say on this head may be considered as an illustration of the confidence, and the hope expressed in the text now before us.

Excuse me in mentioning a few instances; though we have not time to enlarge on the subject. What was the language of holy Job in the early ages of the world? "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and
"that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.
"And though after my skin, worms destroy this
"body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I
"shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold,
"and not another, though my reins be consumed
"within me!"* What was the language of David in a following age? "The Lord is my shepherd,
"I shall not want. The Lord is my light, and my
"salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the
"strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"†

* Job xix 25, 26, 27. † Psalm xxiii. 1. xxvii. 1.

What was the language of the good men in the time of Jehoshaphat? Allowing the psalm before us to be composed at the time which we have supposed, this very psalm is an evidence of their knowledge of interest in God, and their confidence in him. "This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."

Attend to the declarations and holy triumphs of the New Testament saints. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.—We have now received the atonement. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." * "We know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." †—"Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. In whom we have redemption, through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." ‡ Passages of this kind are too many to be easily numbered.

Nor can it, with propriety, be alledged that these were the declarations of the most eminent believers *only*. They are evidently expressed as the language of believers *in general*, and other passages still more expressly declare that this evidence of interest in

* Rom. vi. 1, 2, 11. † 2 Cor. v. 1. ‡ Col. i. 12, 13, 14.

the blessed God, and future happiness, was the common privilege of believers. The apostle, addressing the Hebrews, in reference to the sufferings which they had formerly endured for the sake of Christianity, says, “ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, *knowing* in yourselves, that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.” * These common Christians had this knowledge; and therefore it cannot be the privilege of distinguished saints only. He also tells the Romans, “ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, by which ye cry Abba, Father.” † The Spirit is given to true believers, for this end among others, that it may “bear witness with their spirits that they are the children of God;” ‡ and hereby they know that they dwell in God, and he in them, because he hath given them of his spirit! § This is not the privilege of a few only, but of all true Christians; for “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” ||

Thus it evidently appears from the infallible oracles that persons may know whether they are or are not interested in God, or in a state of salvation. If, then, we may determine this great point, by serious enquiry, and honest self-examination, is it not a matter of infinite consequence that every one of you

* Heb. x. 34. † Rom. viii. 14, 15. ‡ Rom. viii. 16.

§ John iii. 24. iv. 13. || Rom. viii. 9.

should begin now to make the enquiry ; and never rest till you have obtained a full answer to this all-important question ? It is necessary for your safety ; lest you should be deceived, and not discover the deception till it be too late. How awful to find yourselves fatally mistaken at the day of judgment, when the decisive sentence shall be passed, which can never be reversed to all eternity !

I beseech you to take a view of the dreadful condition of those, who, at that day, will say to our Lord Jesus, the Judge, “ Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name cast out devils ? and in thy name done many wonderful works ? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you ; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” † How melancholy is the state represented by that of the foolish virgins ! What will you do in the great day, if this should be your condition ? These were professors of religion ; such as continued their profession to the last ; but have only the *form* of religion. They come too late, crying “ Lord, Lord, open to us.” But the Lord answers them saying, “ I know you not ;” and they are for ever expelled from his blissful presence. ‡

Consider another solemn representation of that disappointment with which many professors will meet at the day of judgment. The good Lord grant that not one of you may be among the unhap-

† Mat. v. 22, 23.

‡ Mat. xxv. 12.

py number ! “ Strive to enter in at the strait gate :
 “ for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and
 “ shall not be able ; When once the Master of the
 “ house is risen up, and hath shut to the door ; and
 “ ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the
 “ door ; saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and he
 “ shall answer and say unto you, I know you not
 “ whence ye are : Then shall he begin to say, we
 “ have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou
 “ hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell
 “ you, I know you not whence ye are ; depart
 “ from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall
 “ be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see
 “ Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the pro-
 “ phets in the kingdom of God, and you your-
 “ selves thrust out.” †

How awful, Sirs, to hear that, at the last day,
 many professors will meet with a fatal disappoint-
 ment ! How infinitely important is it, for every one
 of us now “ while it is called to-day,” to enquire
 whether we have solid scriptural evidence that “ this
 “ God is our God ;” that where this is not the case,
 every one may by the divine blessing, awake out of
 sleep, and that all who are in this happy situation,
 may go on their way rejoicing, and view approach-
 ing death and the judgment-day, with peace and
 tranquility !

† Luke xiii. 24—28.

Without this evidence of your interest in a powerful and gracious God, what is there in this world, that can support your spirits in a time of trial, or fortify your minds against adversity and death? Can any thing, without this, influence your gratitude, or direct your tempers and passions in generous, filial, evangelical obedience? Without this, is not your obedience that of a slave, a mere task? and your religion a piece of drudgery? Whereas, in the enjoyment of this evidence, you can rejoice in the Lord, and triumph in the God of your salvation. You can unite with the New Testament believers, in "giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made you meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;"* you can feel the force of the exhortation, "that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory;"† and when death approaches, in whatever form, you will be able to say, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."‡

III. The third general observation which the words before us suggest, is, that when this great point is settled, when you have solid scriptural evi-

* Col. i. 12.

† 2 Thess. ii. 12.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.

dence of your interest in the Father of Mercies, then it will be for your comfort, and it ought to be your delightful and frequent employment, to contemplate the divine character, works, and promises; and on every review of these subjects, to make the reflection, and edifying application contained in our text. *This* God, you may then cheerfully, and with unutterable satisfaction, say, *this* God, who has given us this account of his own character, *this* God, whose power has performed these wonderful works, *this* God, who has given us these exceeding great and precious promises; *this* God of infinite power, and of infinite goodness, "is our God, for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."

Such was the method of those for whom this psalm was penned. They have here reviewed some of the attributes and works of God. But they do not review them as matters of mere speculation. They consider their own interest in them; and rejoice in him to whom these attributes belong, and who has performed these mighty works, as their God, Father, and everlasting Friend, and thus "encourage themselves in the Lord their God." Such an improvement of divine revelation, and of the facts recorded in it, will feed and nourish the soul, and produce the best effects in the tempers and lives of real saints. By such methods, the word of divine grace is "able to build you up, and
"to

“ to give you an inheritance among all them who
“ are sanctified.” *

This method of improving the word of God is yet more easy, and may be more profitable to real Christians than it was to those good men who lived under the Jewish œconomy. The divine character was then less clearly revealed; fewer dispensations of Providence were then recorded; and the promises made to the saints in those ages were not so numerous, nor did they contain those rich treasures of grace and glory, which are contained in the promises of the New Testament. Nor was the great work of redemption and reconciliation by the Son of God, in those ages, so clearly understood, as it is now, by all who read the New Testament under divine direction, sincerely desiring to be taught of God. “ Many prophets and righteous
“ men, of former times, have desired to see those
“ things which we see, and have not seen them;
“ and to hear those things which we hear, and have
“ not heard them.” †

To true believers in Christ “ are given exceed-
“ ing great and precious promises, that by these
“ they may be partakers of the divine nature;” ‡
and these promises contain whatever can make them truly and substantially happy, in earth and in heaven. These promises are wells of salvation, from whence the righteous may, with joy, draw living

* Acts xx. 32. † Matt. xiii. 17. ‡ 2 Pet. ii. 4.

water,

water, for their refreshment, when fatigued with the labours, or oppressed with the calamities of a miserable world; or with the *fiery trials* in which they may be called to struggle with the enemies of their peace and comfort, in passing through life, to their better and heavenly country.

I therefore recommend it to you, my friends, as a sacred employment, which may be intermingled with all your other concerns, that, in pious meditation, you frequently survey the scripture character of God, his mighty works, and his precious promises; and, if you are born again, which, I trust, is the happy condition of many now present, frequently recollect these subjects, and always conclude your survey, with some such application to yourselves, as the words before us contain. “*This* “ God is our God, for ever and ever; he will be “ our guide even unto death.”

* To engage your attention to such an improvement of divine revelation, as I here recommend, and to assist you in it, let us very briefly consider the character which our heavenly Father has given of himself in the holy scriptures;—who have a right to use the words of the text in their meditations upon it;—and what is supposed and contained in the words, for the instruction and consolation of those who are interested in them.

First, Let us briefly survey the scripture character of God, concerning whom these encouraging things are spoken. This will be easily collected

ed from his attributes, works, and promises. To enlarge on these includes a considerable part of our stated ministerial labours; so that if we had time for such enlargement, it is not now particularly necessary; and the limits of our time admit of nothing more than a few general observations.

The God in whom the believer is interested, and in whom he confides, is possessed of *infinite power*: “with him, nothing is impossible.”† He declares himself “the Almighty God.”‡ And as such, his saints have, in all ages, been taught to approach him, and to place their confidence in him. ||

He is also *every where present* to employ his infinite power, in behalf of all his people, and against his and their enemies, so far as his wisdom directs, for their advantage, and his own glory. “If we ascend up into heaven, he is there; if we make our bed in hell, behold he is there. If we take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall his hand lead us, and his right hand shall hold us.”§ He sees and knows all that is done or designed by his creatures. “He knows our down-sitting; and our up-rising; he understands our thoughts afar off. He compasses our path, and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways.

† Luke i. 37.

‡ Gen. xvii. 1.

|| Gen. xviii. 14. Job xlii. 2.

§ Psalm cxxxix. 3, 9, 10.

“ There

“ There is not a word in our tongue, but he knows
 “ it altogether. We cannot go from his Spirit, or
 “ flee from his presence. The darkness hideth not
 “ from him; but the night shineth as the day.
 “ The darkness and the light are both alike to
 “ him.” *

He is a God of *infinite wisdom*; the “ only wise
 “ God.” †—“ In wisdom he made all his works.” ‡
 By his wisdom he can defeat all the designs formed
 against his children, whether by men or devils;
 and can so over-rule, controul, and dispose all
 events, that they shall terminate in his glory, and
 the advantage of such as love him. §

He is a God of *faithfulness* and *truth*; will per-
 form all his promises, and never leave nor forsake
 those who put their trust in him. || He will be
 with them in every trying circumstance. When
 they pass through the fire and through the water,
 he will be their guardian; and even in the valley
 of the shadow of death, he is with them; his rod
 and his staff comfort them. ¶

He is *immutable*. “ With him there is no varia-
 “ bleness, neither shadow of turning.” ++ All the
 affairs and enjoyments of life are frequently chang-
 ing. Riches, honours, pleasures, and friendship

* Ps. cxxxix. 2, 3, 4, 7, 12. † 1 Tim. i. 17. Jude v. 25.

† Ps. civ. 24.

§ Rom. viii. 28.

|| Heb. xlii. 5.

¶ Ps. xxiii. 4.

++ James i. 17. Job xxiii. 13.

among men seldom continue long in the same state. Could they make us happy, they are all uncertain; may be enjoyed to day and lost to morrow. Changes frequently take place in our minds, and the minds of those with whom we have connections. Our mental capacities, and those of our intimate friends may be deranged, or otherways disordered, in a few days or hours. Of this we have lately had some affecting proofs. In a word, the world itself, and all that is in it, will soon be burnt up. But the God in whom the true Christian places his confidence, abides the same for ever and ever. His truth, and his regard to his children, continue to all generations. "He is of one mind, and who can turn him?" *—He is a God of *pity* and tender *compassion*. "He delighteth in mercy." †—"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." ‡ He invites us therefore "to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." §

I only say, once more, He is an *everlasting* God. He lives for ever and ever. His "years shall have no end." || Earthly comforts die; friends die. Nothing here can be enjoyed long; but God is an everlasting Father, Friend, and portion to all who trust in him.

* Job. xxiii. 13. † Mic. vii. 18. ‡ Psa. ciii. 13, 14.

§ Heb. iv. 16. || Psalm. cii. 27.

On this very cursory and imperfect survey of a few of the divine perfections, it appears to be an inexpressible consolation to be able to view this God as our God. What divine support in a time of adversity does the consideration administer, when, on good evidence, we are able to say, This God, this all-powerful, omnipresent, omniscient, infinitely wise, faithful, and unchanging, compassionate and everlasting God, "is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to death." Yet such is the privilege of every real follower of Jesus Christ.

The great God is further to be known by his works. I here particularly mention his works of creation, providence, and redemption. We begin with those of creation. "The heavens declare his glory. The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: even his eternal power and godhead."† None but a being of infinite power and wisdom could form this mighty fabric, and adjust the several parts of it, in the admirable manner which our eyes daily behold. Who but the Almighty Jehovah could form the luminaries of heaven, or direct them in their courses, from which they never vary, and in which they perpetually revolve? From whom has the earth received power to produce her increase, or the productions of the earth power to nourish it's inhabitants? From the

† Psa. xix. 1. Rom. i. 20.

Lord God omnipotent. Or, to use the lofty language of sacred prophecy, “ Who hath measured
 “ the waters in the hollow of his hand ! and meted
 “ out heaven with the span, and comprehended the
 “ dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the
 “ mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance !” *
 Reason unites with scripture, in asserting that none
 but the everlasting God could be the “ creator of
 “ the ends of the earth.”

Not only the power and the wisdom of God, but
 his goodness too, appears conspicuous in the works
 of creation. “ The earth is full of his riches,” †
 and all the productions of it are wonderfully adapt-
 ed to promote the felicity of man. We daily prove,
 and every crumb of bread and every drop of water,
 ought to remind us, that the Lord Jehovah has
 condescended to consult our welfare in all the en-
 joyments of life.

Now every true Christian ought to contemplate
 these various operations of the hands of God, with
 the power, wisdom, and love manifested in them :
 to remember how easy it is for a God of such power
 and wisdom, to relieve in every distress, to supply
 every want, to support in every trial, and defend from
 every enemy ; and how certain it is that a God of
 such goodness cannot be unmindful of his children.
 He may therefore with pleasure, repeat the words of
 the text, and apply them to himself : saying to his

* Isa. xl. 12.

† Psa. civ. 24.

own soul, " This God, who in the works of creation, has given such glorious demonstrations of his power, his wisdom, and his goodness, is my God for ever and ever ; and he will be my guide even unto death."

The believer's God is the God of *providence*. It is he by whose power we are every moment preserved in life. " In him we live, move, and have our being." * Our necessities, which are continually returning, are continually supplied, from his munificent hand. " The eyes of all wait upon him, and he giveth them their meat in due season ; he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing." † By him the seasons revolve, and the earth is made fruitful for the use of man. For this end " he visiteth the earth, and watereth it. He greatly enricheth it with the river of God, which is full of water ; he prepareth corn for us, when he hath so provided for it. He watereth the ridges thereof abundantly ; he settleth the furrows thereof. He maketh it soft with showers, and blesteth the springing of it. He crowneth the year with his goodness, and his clouds drop fatness." ‡ Thus the great Jehovah continually provides for the supply, and support of man and beast.

Under the direction of Divine providence, kingdoms and states rise and fall ; and princes are ad-

* Acts. xvii. 28. † Psa. cxlv. 15, 16. civ. 27, 28.

‡ Psa. lxxv. 9, 10, 11.

vanced to thrones, and deposed from them. When we read in sacred or profane history of the rise or demolition of the four great monarchies, which have been so much celebrated in all ages, since the times in which they flourished, the *Babylonian*, *Persian*, *Grecian*, and *Roman*, or of any others, we ought to remark upon them, that it is God who “ changes the times and the seasons, he removeth kings, and setteth up kings.”* The greatest are but worms before the God of the Christian, whose prerogative alone it is, at his own pleasure, to “ put down one and set up another.”

The providence of God is concerned in their defence and protection, and in the destruction of their enemies. The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth, and the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.”† By his hand the ancient patriarchs were preserved, amidst strangers, sometimes amidst enemies. “ When they went from one nation to another ; from one kingdom to another people. He suffered no man to do them wrong : yea he reproveth kings for their sakes.”‡ The wonderful preservation of the Israelites in Egypt, their passage through the Red Sea, when their enemies were destroyed, and their preservation, in a journey of forty years through the wilderness, afford many striking instances of the power, wisdom, and tender care of the great God over them ; and abun-

* Dan. ii. 21.

† Psa. ix. 16.

‡ Psa. cv. 13, 14.

dantly

dantly prove that those who have an interest in him need not fear any evil, however powerful or enraged their enemies may be, or in whatever situation they may be placed. *

The history of Job, of David, of Jeremiah, of Paul, of Peter, and of many of the prophets, and apostles, contains events, had we time to illustrate them, which most strikingly evince that those who put their trust in the Lord shall never be ashamed nor confounded, world without end.

The history of the destruction of Pharoah and his host in the Red Sea, of Moab and Edom, of Babylon, Tyre and Jerusalem, with other nations and their mighty princes, affords a continued proof, from age to age, that none ever hardened his heart against God, and prospered; that "his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure;" and that all his enemies, and the enemies of his people, shall sooner or later fall before him.

But the glorious work of redemption gives us the most noble display of the wisdom and grace of God. When all mankind had united in rebellion against their Maker, when all had gone astray, every one turning to his own way, the great God laid upon his dear Son, the iniquity of us all †. The adorable Immanuel was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that all true believers in him, might receive the adoption of

* See the Books of Exodus and Numbers. † Isa. liii. 6.

sons.* “He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, “that he might bring us to God.”† In consequence of this great undertaking, the gospel (the good news of salvation) is now proclaimed to perishing men. By the command of the Lord of glory, his ministers are now authorized to declare this good news to every human creature; and to assure all, wherever they come, that through this man is preached to them the forgiveness of sins;‡ and that all who “believe in him, are justified from all things.” The great and righteous God can now be “just, “and yet justify him that believeth in Jesus;”|| and in consequence of this great work, performed for a sinful world by the Son of God himself, mercy, free pardon, and eternal life are now proclaimed to miserable sinners, through faith in his blood. The gospel (the *good news* of what the Lord has done for lost man) is proclaimed to *every creature*; and the guilty and helpless are, in the most compassionate manner, and the most pathetic language, invited to partake of all the blessings of salvation, without money and without price. Those who cordially receive the gospel, are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. They are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son; and have redemption through his blood, even the for-

* Gal. iv. 4, 5. † 1 Peter iii. 18. ‡ Mark xvi. 15.
 Acts xiii. 38, 39. || Rom. iii. 26.

givenness of sins. * They are now, through grace, entitled to every good, in a dear Redeemer. He " of God is made unto them, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."† All things are theirs, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death ; all are theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. ‡

Now every true believer may survey, from time to time, all these various displays of his divine Father, the former of all things, the great Disposer of all events, the inexhaustible fountain of happiness, who has manifested his power, his wisdom, his love and compassion, by all these various and wonderful methods ; who has provided for them and bestowed upon them, all these treasures of grace and glory ; and on every survey, with a pleasure, which nothing else can give, he may repeat the exclamation before us, " This God is my God, for ever and ever ; he " will be my guide even unto death."

Once more ; God is known by his " exceeding " great and precious promises." They are " all yea, " and Amen, to his glory, in Christ Jesus."§ They are numerous and various, adapted to every condition of real Christians ; to comfort the mind in every distress, and to relieve the anxious spirit in every time of necessity. To repeat, and even to recount them on this occasion, would take up too much of

* Col. i. 12, 13, 14.

† 1 Cor. i. 30.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23.

§ 2 Cor. i. 20.

our time. To mention a few must suffice. "The
 " Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give
 " grace and glory ; and no good thing will he with-
 " hold from them that walk uprightly." *—" Fear
 " thou not, for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for
 " I am thy God ; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will
 " help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee, with the right
 " hand of my righteousness." †—" What man is
 " he that feareth the Lord ? Him shall he teach in
 " the way that he shall choose. His soul shall dwell at
 " ease ; and his seed shall inherit the land. The secret
 " of the Lord is with them that fear him ; and he will
 " shew them his covenant." ‡—" Who is he among
 " you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of
 " his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no
 " light ? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and
 " stay upon his God." ||—" Say not thou I will recom-
 " pense evil : but wait on the Lord, and he shall
 " save thee." §—" Seek ye first, the kingdom of
 " God, and his righteousness, and all these things
 " shall be added unto you." **—" Ask, and it shall be
 " given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it
 " shall be opened unto you. If ye, being evil, know
 " how to give good gifts unto your children, how
 " much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy
 " Spirit to them that ask him ? †† Be perfect, be of
 " good comfort ; be of one mind ; live in peace ; and

* Psa. lxxxiv. 2. † Isa. xli. 10. ‡ Psa. xxv. 12, 13, 14.

|| Isa. i. 10.

§ Prov. xx. 22.

** Mat. xi. 33.

†† Luke xi. 9, 13.

" the God of love and peace shall be with you." * Be
 " careful for nothing ; but in every thing, by prayer
 " and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your re-
 " quests be made known unto God ; and the peace of
 " God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep
 " your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." †
 " Let your conversation be without covetousness : and
 " be content with such things as ye have, for he hath
 " said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." ‡

These are but a small number of the promises with
 which it has pleased the wise and gracious God to
 indulge his children, for their support and consol-
 ation in this world of pain and sorrow. But they
 shew what he can do, and what he certainly will do,
 for such as love and fear him. Such ought to trea-
 sure them up in their minds ; to meditate upon them ;
 to live in the assured expectation that they will all
 be performed, to those to whom they are addressed :
 and to rejoice in this powerful, faithful, and graci-
 ous God, as their " God for ever and ever ; and as
 " their guide even unto death." This leads me briefly
 to consider,

Secondly, Who the persons are, that have a right
 to use this language ; and to rejoice in God, as their
 God for ever and ever.

Most certainly these are not the openly profane,
 such are rebels against the Most High. They are
 considered in that light now, and will be treated as

* 2 Cor. xiii. 11. † Phil. iv. 6, 7. ‡ Heb. xiii. 5.
 rebels

rebels hereafter. Now, "the face of the Lord is
 "against them that do evil ; * and what an awful
 day will that be when the great Judge of all the
 earth shall say to the ungodly, "Because I called,
 "and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and
 "no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought all my
 "counsel, and would none of my reproof : I also
 "will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when
 "your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as de-
 "solation, and your destruction cometh as a whirl-
 "wind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon
 "you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will
 "not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they
 "shall not find me." † Should any of you, my dear
 hearers, die in your sins, unpardoned, unrenewed,
 this will be your condition ; and then, instead
 of being able to rejoice in the Lord as your God,
 you must lie under his vengeance, as impenitent
 rebels against him, in blackness of darkness for ever
 and ever.

Nor can the carnal, hypocritical professors
 triumph, in the language of the passage now before
 us. These, alas ! are dead, while they live. Con-
 demned, and alienated from the life of God, while
 they make a pretence to religion. We have already
 seen, that our blessed Lord represents this as the
 dreadful condition of many professors, who will,
 at the last day, be banished from the Saviour of sin-

• Psa. xxxiv. 16. † Pet. iii. 12. † Pro. i. 24—28.

ners, and finally rejected by him.* We often repeat it, my friends, and I beseech you to hear, and to regard the repetition of it once again, that whatever profession we make, however we are distinguished by forms or by sentiments, it is an invariable maxim of Him who will be our Judge, that "he who committeth sin is of the devil;"† and "the hope of the hypocrite shall perish."‡

We must, therefore, look for another class of men, who, alone, can, with satisfaction, make use of the language of the text. These, and these only, have scripture authority to triumph in God, as their God, for ever and ever, and as their guide, even unto death. In order to learn who these are, you will consider,

1. That as all men have broken the divine law, and are, on that account, exposed to condemnation, the great and gracious God, out of love to us in this fallen and condemned condition, has introduced into our world a new and better covenant, established upon better promises. || A covenant of free grace, suited to the condition of fallen man, and containing all that is necessary to make him happy, notwithstanding his deplorable situation, by reason of his transgressions.

* See Matth. vii. 22. xxv. 10. Luke xiii. 24, 25.

† John iii. 8.

‡ Job viii. 13.

|| Heb. viii. 6—10.

2. One article or part of this new gospel covenant is, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Whoever therefore is interested in the new covenant, has a scripture right to claim an humble relation to God as his God.

3. This new and better covenant is made known to sinners in the precious gospel, which gospel is proclaimed to every creature;† and every sinner, where the gospel comes, is invited to embrace it, and to partake of the benefits of it. The glorious Redeemer invites all the ends of the earth to look to him, and be saved.‡ Whosoever will, he graciously says, let him take the water of life freely.§

4. Though this new covenant of free grace is proclaimed to all men, yet none enjoy the blessings of it, till they come to Christ by faith. Till then every man, as a sinner, remains *condemned*, and "the wrath of God abides upon him."|| But on a cordial reception of Jesus Christ, as exhibited in the everlasting gospel, the great God *makes* the covenant with individuals, which is exhibited to all men; and from that moment they are interested in all the precious blessings contained in it. Suffer me to repeat the gracious words of our compassionate Father, addressed to you, my fellow-sinners, on this

† Mark xvi. 15.

‡ Isai. xlv. 22.

§ Rev. xxii. 17.

|| John iii. 18, 36.

delightful subject. "Ho, every one that thirsteth,
 " come ye to the waters, and he that hath no mo-
 " ney ; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine,
 " and milk, without money, and without price.
 " Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is
 " not bread ? and your labour for that which sa-
 " tisfieth not ? Hearken diligently unto me, and
 " eat ye that which is good, and let your soul de-
 " light itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and
 " come unto me ; hear, and your soul shall live, and
 " I will *make* an everlasting covenant with you,
 " even the sure mercies of David."† From this
 glorious passage, it appears, that however generally
 the gospel covenant is held out to men, none have
 the blessings of it *ensured* to themselves, but such
 as obey the gospel, and cordially embrace the free
 salvation of Christ, to which the gospel invites
 them. All these, however, may, on the most sub-
 stantial grounds, rejoice, and even in times of the
 deepest adversity triumphantly say, ' Though my
 ' house, or my other circumstances, be not as I
 ' could wish them, " yet the Lord hath made with
 " me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things
 " and sure."||

5. In the same divine covenant of grace, the
 great God makes another promise to all true be-
 lievers, of which they all experience the fulfilment,
 upon their cordial and practical embracing the gos-

† Isai. lv. 1, 2, 3.

|| 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

pel, and the experience of which, is the grand confirming evidence of their interest in God as their God. "I will put my laws into their mind, "and write them in their hearts."† Every true believer experiences in his mind, and makes manifest in his behaviour, a real change of disposition: "the love of God is shed abroad in his heart, by "the Holy Ghost, which is given unto him."‡ He is a "new creature."|| He "delights in the law "of God, after the inward man."§ In a word, the apostle gives his full character in a few plain expressions, which I request all my dear hearers to apply to themselves. "Being now made free from "sin, and become servants to God, ye have your "fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting "life."¶

May I address these last words to you? Can I do it in truth? Can you go into your closets, and appeal to a heart-searching God, that you are thus made free from the love and practice of sin, are become servants to God, and bring forth fruit unto holiness? Do your consciences bear witness to the truth of it? Do your families and neighbours confirm the truth of it? Remember, brethren, every tree is *known by its fruits*; and if those who are intimately acquainted with you, do not bear

† Heb. viii. 10.

‡ Rom. v. 5.

|| 2 Cor. v. 17.

§ Rom. vii. 22.

¶ Rom. vi. 22.

testimony to the truth of your religion, from the purity of your conduct, it is a certain proof that you have no real religion at all. If, on the other hand, you do, in reality, bear this character, you have the most substantial proof, that "this God is your God for ever and ever, and will be your guide even unto death." We proceed,

Thirdly, To enquire what is implied and contained in the language of the text, and the confidence expressed in it.

1. It implies that the persons who are represented in these words, had the *evidence* of their interest in God. For they positively and confidently declare, "this God is our God." The possibility, necessity, and importance of having this evidence, we have already endeavoured to demonstrate; and I trust none of my dear hearers will be so much their own enemies, as not to observe the substantial consolation which must arise from having the experience of it.

It is true, as the Jewish government was a *theocracy*, as *the Lord was their King*, they were, in a peculiar sense, his people, and he was, in that sense, their God, as distinguished from all other nations of the earth. This was in consequence of the *Abrahamic covenant*, in which Jehovah condescends to tell that eminent patriarch, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed."

“after thee.” † This he afterwards confirmed to Isaac and Jacob; and on this ground, Moses reasons with them in the following manner. “Because the Lord loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight, with his mighty power, out of Egypt.” ‡ — “The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people. But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers.” || — “The Lord had a delight in thy fathers, to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you, among all people, as it is this day.” § In the same manner, the apostle Paul reasons concerning the Jews, with the believing Gentiles. “As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers sakes.” ¶

But it is very manifest that the *good* men under the former dispensation regarded the great God, and rejoiced in him, as *their God*, in a much superior sense: and all true believers, under the gospel, are partakers of those blessings of which the temporal blessings bestowed upon Abraham and his posterity, were only types and shadows; the spiri-

† Gen. xvii. 7.

‡ Deut. iv. 37.

|| Deut. vii. 7, 8.

§ Deut. x. 15.

¶ Rom. xi. 28.

tual blessings of the everlasting gospel. With these, "they who are of faith are blessed, with faithful Abraham."† These, therefore, can rejoice in God as *their God, and as their guide even unto death.* That gospel believers thus rejoiced, we have seen already; and it is a fact confirmed by a great part of the New Testament.

Believers in Jesus, however, it may be proper to observe, had not this evidence from visions, dreams, or sudden impulses of any kind whatever. They inform us, they received this satisfaction respecting their state, in a very different way. They say, "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."||—"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in

† Gal. iii. 9.

|| 1 John ii. 3, 4, 5.

"truth; and hereby we know that we are of the
"truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."†

In this manner the ancient saints proved their interest in God, and their title to heaven. Can any other method be equally safe? It is impossible. Is there any difficulty, if careful to examine ourselves, in coming to a conclusion on these subjects; in obtaining a clear evidence that we do, or do not bear these characters? Surely it cannot be. Let every one, therefore, bring these and similar passages home to his own mind; let him view himself in this glass of scriptural experience. If these are the evidences of his conversion, he may, without hesitation, conclude, that "this God is his God, for ever and ever; and will be his guide even unto death."

2. The language of the text is the language of holy triumph; and implies, that the persons who uttered it were sensible of the unspeakable *value* of an interest in God. This is a divine support in a time of adversity, when earthly comforts fail, and human help is wanting. Then it is that a true believer can exult in the rock of his salvation, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want;"|| is his language. Those who are thus happy in the knowledge of God as their God need fear no enemies, nor be disconcerted in any calamity. "For

† 1 John iii. 14, 17, 18, 19.

|| Psalm xxiii. 1.

“ the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord
 “ will give grace and glory ; and no good thing
 “ will he withhold from them that walk upright-
 “ ly.” † Those who are in this happy state may
 look down with sacred indifference on all earthly
 good, and lifting up their eyes to the everlasting
 hills, from whence all their help comes, can, with
 pleasure, say, “ O Lord God of Hosts ! blessed is
 “ the man that trusteth in thee.” ‡

3. It implies that the real saint takes pleasure in
 being wholly at the disposal of God, and is desirous
 to follow the directions of his word, and the lead-
 ings of his providence and Holy Spirit. The per-
 sons speaking in our text therefore, rejoice in the
 prospect of being under the Divine conduct to the
 end of life. “ He will be our guide even to
 “ death.” The carnal man wishes to gratify him-
 self, and to act according to his own inclination.
 But the child of God views this as both wicked
 and dangerous ; and therefore wishes that God may
 guide him, and rejoices in hope that he will do it.
 “ Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and after-
 “ ward receive me to glory ;” || is expressive of the
 desire of his soul, and the joy of his heart. He
 fears to do wrong. He ardently wishes to do right
 in all things. He is conscious of his own weak-
 ness, and propensity to error. He knows that if

† Psalm lxxxiv. 11.

‡ Ver. 12.

|| Psalm lxxiii. 24.

he be under the Divine direction, he is safe. God has engaged to be always with those that trust in him, to "guide them with his eye," to protect them by his power, to be a sun and shield to them, to give them grace and glory, and never to leave, nor forsake them. All these may therefore say, with sacred pleasure, when the most distressing scenes are before them, "He will be our *guide* even unto "death."

4. The language of the text *contains* in it, all that an immortal soul can possibly stand in need of, or can possibly enjoy, throughout the infinite duration of its existence. A real child of God may look forward into eternity, an awful, vast, immeasurable eternity, and think, what will do me good? what will be my security, what will be my felicity, through all that infinitely extended duration? His faith, if properly exercised, views the promises of an unchanging God, and enables him triumphantly to sing, "This God is my God, for ever and ever." In the unknown, countless, and never-ending myriads of ages, through which my existence shall be continued, this God is my God, my almighty Friend and Father.

Consider the several expressions made use of in this sacred exultation.

Our God! Who can tell how much that term includes? Reflect upon the Divine perfections. He is "the Lord God *omnipotent*." His power is infinite. With God all things are possible. That
infi-

infinitely powerful Being, the faint may say, is my God! Am I attacked by the enemies of my soul from earth and hell? Am I in circumstances of pressing necessity, or immersed in calamities of various kinds? My God is perfectly able to deliver me from all my enemies, and to subdue them all before me. For "He that is on my side is greater than all that are against me. He can supply all my need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." He is perfectly able to support me under all my distresses, or deliver me from them, in that manner, by those means, and at that time, which will be for my greatest advantage; "therefore will I trust in him."

His *understanding* is infinite. He knows my heart, my difficulties, and my inability to bear them, without his power, to support me. He knows all the schemes that can be contrived against me in earth or in hell; and he knows how to defeat the designs of all my enemies; and to make me "conqueror, and more than conqueror, through Him who hath loved me."—"The Lord is my light, and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"

He is a God of love and compassion. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. He knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that
"fear

“fear him.”*—“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.”† In a world like this, attended as the Christian is with various calamities, and conscious of various frailties, were it not for the compassion and mercy of God, he could have no consolation or hope. But in these views of the Divine character, he can even rejoice in tribulation, and triumph in adversity. His faith rests on the infallible word. These and multitudes of similar passages often cheer his otherwise disconsolate heart. “I am poor and “needy,” he says, “but the Lord thinketh upon me; thou art my help and my deliverer, make no “tarrying, O my God.”‡

Such are the views, and such is the language of that faith, by which these words were uttered; and such the Divine support of those who can, from scriptural evidence, claim a spiritual and filial relation to the Almighty Ruler of the universe.

Our God FOR EVER AND EVER! What a glorious additional consolation, and ground of satisfaction! Here, methinks, I see the real Christian take a prospect of all the possible exigencies of future life, of the solemn scenes of death, of the unknown situation of those in a separate state, between death and judgment, and of an awful eternity, after the solemn day of judgment is past. In every

* Psalm ciii. 13, 14, 17.

† Ver. 8.

‡ Psalm xl. 17.

"state," says he, "in every danger, in every moment
 "of my existence, this God is my God." An *im-*
mortal soul wants a portion that will exist, that
 will be invariable, that can give complete felicity,
 through an infinite duration. The scripture ex-
 hibits the blessed Jehovah as this portion. The
 believer views, embraces, and lives upon him, as
 such a portion. "The Lord is my portion, saith my
 "soul, therefore will I hope in him."* None but
everlasting blessings can satisfy a soul that must live
 to eternity. The blessings of the new covenant are
 all everlasting blessings, the gospel that lays them
 open to man is an *everlasting* gospel;† the covenant
 which contains them, and which is made with every
 believer, is an *everlasting* covenant,‡ and therefore
 completely adequate to our most enlarged desires
 and expectations.

In passing through life, we have many fatigues,
 pains, cares, distresses, and dangers. How many of
 these are before us, on this side death no mortal
 knows. But if God be our God in them, all shall
 be well. That he will be the God of all true Christi-
 ans, whatever they meet with here, we are assured
 by the infallible oracles; and it is the province of
 faith to rest in that assurance. Thus the believer
 enjoys tranquility, and gives the glory to his Al-
 mighty Friend and Guardian.

* Lament. iii. 24. † Rev. xiv. 6. ‡ 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.
 Isa. liii. 3.

“ Death is a melancholy day, to them that have
 “ no God.” What gloomy horrors surround these,
 at that solemn moment ! What tormenting reflections on the sins of a life which is now ended !
 What distressing prospects of meeting an angry God,
 whose laws have been transgressed, and whose grace
 has been neglected ! But this is not the case of the
 true Christian. His God will, even at that important
 season, be with him ; his rod and staff shall comfort
 him. * How unspeakably consolatory is it to be
 able to say with the blessed Apostle, “ I am now
 “ ready to be offered ; and the time of my departure
 “ is at hand. I have fought the good fight ; I have
 “ finished my course ; I have kept the faith.
 “ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of
 “ righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous
 “ Judge, shall give me at that day.” † Yet such is
 the consolation of those who have scriptural evidence of their interest in God. He will be their
 God in that most solemn moment ; and they may rejoice in life in the prospect of it.

After death, till the morning of the resurrection,
 is a long state of existence, of which we, in flesh
 and blood, can scarcely form an idea. In that state,
 the two component parts of man will be far distant.
 The body consigned to the dust, to be a companion
 of worms, and food for them. The soul is in paradise,
 in Abraham’s bosom. Who shall be the guar-

* Psa. xxiii. 4.

† 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

dian of these two companions, so long endeared to each other, and now so far separated? *Our* God will care for them both; and at the great day of final retribution, having collected and re-animated the scattered dust, will re-unite them, and every way fit them for an everlasting abode with himself. All true believers shall be "ever with the Lord."* From that blissful moment, through never-ending ages, "God shall have wiped away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are all passed away."†

But the saints hope, not only for an eternal heaven, but for the *divine conduct*, to bring them safely to it. God will "guide them with his counsel," through this world of darkness and folly, and afterward he will "receive them to glory."‡ The former, as well as the latter of these unspeakable blessings, is ensured to all true believers in that everlasting covenant, which is "all their salvation, and all their desire."

A child of God knows not how dreary the passages of his future life may be, nor the dangers to which he may be exposed. But he has the promise of a faithful and unchanging God, that he "will never leave him, that he shall be as mount Zion, which standeth fast for ever." That "as the

* 1 Thess. iv. 17.

† Rev. xxi. 4.

‡ Psa. lxxiii. 24.

"mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord
 "is round about his people, from henceforth, even
 "forever."*

A real saint has many perplexing circumstances, in which he must be concerned, in which he is often at a loss how to act right. He has many foes to encounter, many difficulties to grapple with; and feels many propensities in corrupt nature to forget God, and neglect duty. By these he would soon be involved in guilt, distress, and darkness, were it not that the adorable Jesus, who has promised to be with his people to the end of the world, is "able to save him to the uttermost."†

Everything before us is dark and unknown. We "know not what shall be on the morrow," nor "what a *day* may bring forth." But we know him who has said "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."‡—"I will make darkness light before them, and "crooked things straight. These things will I do "unto them, and not forsake them."§ The all-glorious Jehovah condescends to be the guardian of his people, to conduct them through every scene, to support them in all trials, to direct their hearts, and their steps, and dispose their affairs, so that all things in which they are concerned, shall most assuredly work together for their good.¶ Such assur-

* Psa. cxxv. 1, 2.

† Mat. xviii. 20. Heb. vii. 25.

‡ Mal. iii. 6.

§ Isai. xlii. 16.

¶ Rom. viii. 28.

ance they all have that "God will be their God
 "for ever and ever, and their guide even unto
 "death." Such are the objects presented to the
 view of the believer, in this animating passage of
 scripture; and such are the encouragements which
 are afforded to them, at all times, to trust in him, and
 in every situation to say "let the Lord be mag-
 "nified."

We conclude with a few general observations, by
 way of improvement.

First, Hence we easily observe what are the gra-
 cious designs of God in the propagation of true reli-
 gion in the world, in the ministry of his word, and
 in all the means which he makes use of for the con-
 version of sinners. Not that they may be rich or
 great in this life; but that he may be their *God*, and
 their *guide*, and that they may live in the comforta-
 ble evidence that he is so; and thus be happy here,
 and rejoice in the daily delightful prospect of ever-
 lasting felicity, with him in his glorious kingdom.
 God forbid that either we who are so highly ho-
 noured, by being intrusted with the gospel ministry,
 or you whom we have the honour and pleasure to
 address, should ever forget, the great object which
 our Saviour has in view, in sending his ministers
 forth to preach his gospel; and which they are to
 keep in view, as a *principal* object, in all their
 ministrations! "To open their eyes, and to turn
 "them from darkness to light, and from the power
 "of satan unto God; that they may receive for-

“givenness of sins, and inheritance among them
“which are sanctified by faith, which is in me.”

If this blessed end be accomplished, all is well.

You are safe for time and eternity, and you are
“our glory and joy.” But if this end be not ac-

complished, nothing is effected to any good pur-
pose, ye are yet in your sins; and in this sense,

“our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain.”

The consequence, though we cannot enlarge, is too awfully important, to be passed over without being mentioned. You die in your sins, and the word which is spoken to you, by the authority of Jesus Christ, even that word will judge and condemn you at the last day.*

2. We learn hence, what is the nature and use of faith, in the life and death of a real saint. The faith of the gospel is not a mere notion, but a genuine sensible confidence in the almighty, unchangeable, and everlasting God. A confidence which supports the mind in adversity, enables the distressed saint to “rejoice in tribulation,” and to look through all the unknown tracts of future life, the horrors of death, and the ages of eternity, with sacred tranquillity. Take care, my dear hearers, that you do not satisfy yourselves with mere notions and forms. “Examine yourselves, whether ye be
“in the faith. Prove your own selves.”

* John xii. 48.

3. We hence observe the awful difference of a faint and a sinner, through all the stages of their existence. In what a dreadful condition is an unconverted sinner in this life, whether in prosperity or adversity! He is "a child of wrath;"—"the wrath of God abides upon him."* In what a dreadful condition at death! "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness."† How awful is the sentence denounced against such at the day of judgment! "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."‡ What unutterable anguish must these eternally endure in that world where "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever!"|| where the guilt contracted by transgressing the righteous law of God, and the additional guilt of neglecting the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, will lie upon them without intermission, and world without end!

On the other hand, the real faint is happy in every situation here, and shall be inexpressibly happy to all eternity. Whatever takes place in this world, "it shall be well with the righteous." They are, here, "the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ; being justified by faith, they have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."§

* Ephes. ii. 2. John iii. 36. † Prov. xiv. 32.

‡ Matth. xxv. 41.

|| Rev. xiv. 11.

§ Gal. iii. 26. Rom. v. 1.

Their heavenly Father has pledged his veracity that "he will never leave them, nor forsake them."* So that they need not be afraid of any thing that can happen, amidst all the vicissitudes of time. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."†

At the hour of death, gloomy and solemn as that hour is, the saints are supported and comforted. "The righteous hath hope in his death;"‡ and that hope is gladness.|| The opening prospect of a never-ending world of glory, is infinitely better to him than all the treasures of earth; and, in spite of all the infidel can say, and satan suggest,

"The good man's dying chamber is the gate of heaven,
"His God sustains him in his final hour!
"His final hour brings glory to his God!"

At the day of judgment, the righteous shall stand "before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy."§ The Judge himself, whose smile makes

* Heb. xiii. 5.

† Rom. viii. 38, 39.

‡ Prov. xiv. 32.

|| Chap. x. 28.

§ Jude 24.

heaven, will, at that day, smile upon them, as his brethren. And who can describe the rapture which will be excited, when, on his glorious throne, before the assembled world, he shall bid them welcome to all the felicities of the New Jerusalem! when, in accents unknown to mortals, they shall hear him say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world!"* Then shall they be admitted into those blissful regions, where they for ever shall "behold his glory," where all tears shall be "wiped away from their eyes," where they shall be "even as the angels," in the full fruition of all that they hoped and waited for in this world of sorrow, pain, and folly; in his presence, where there is "fulness of joy," and at his right hand, where there are "pleasures for evermore."†

Such is the awful difference between the condition of saints and sinners, here and hereafter. So happy are all they who have God for their portion. "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."‡ That this heritage may be yours, living, dying, and eternally, God, of his infinite mercy, grant, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Redeemer. *Amen.*

* Matth. xxv. 34.

† Psalm x. 11.

‡ Isa. liv. 17.

THE END.

AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF
MRS. ELIZABETH TAYLOR.

ⓑ This account of Mrs. Taylor is addressed to the Minister who was requested and expected to preach her Funeral Sermon. It was nearly prepared for him, before we received his final refusal to preach the Sermon, that he might select from it, what he should think proper to mention in the pulpit, or to publish with the Funeral Sermon, in what form he pleased. It is thought adviseable now, to present it to the reader in its original form.

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

MRS. TAYLOR was born in the year 1744, at Hirst in Wadsworth, in the parish of Halifax, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, of honest and reputable parents; whose circumstances were easy
and

and comfortable, though not very affluent. Her education was such as discovered the prudence of her parents; not remarkably polite, but plain and useful; rather above what was common in those parts; adapted to her condition, and sufficient to qualify her to be an useful member of society.

Though her parents were honest and reputable, they did not appear, at that time, to have much relish for evangelical godliness, and therefore could not be supposed to give evangelical instructions to their children. Her mother, however, was descended from the Presbyterians of the last century, who, it is well known, were, in general, friends to the peculiar truths of the gospel, and zealous for vital religion; and some remains of evangelical principles still continued in the family, though, in a great measure, as uninfluential notions, or mere sentiments. They did not seem to operate on the mind, further than by restraining from gross enormities, to moralize the conduct.

Mrs. Taylor's father died before I had the pleasure of being acquainted with the family. But her mother is still living.* Since the time above-mentioned,

* After the above was written, I received information that my wife's mother died on the night of the 25th; two days after her daughter; the very night before the information of my wife's death arrived at her brother's house. Whatever circumstance may excite pain on this occasion, it is a great pleasure

tioned, she has been brought to the experimental knowledge of the truth; and to this day, continues an upright and valuable member of that church in serving which the most active part of my life has been employed. She has long laboured under affliction; and is now honouring her God and Saviour, by patiently waiting for his coming to take her to himself.

In the beginning of my ministry in the year 1762, Mrs. Taylor, with many other young persons, began to attend upon my very imperfect ministrations; and by the blessing of God upon them, she (with many others) was brought, as I have good reason to believe, to the experience of true conversion. She was baptized, and received into the fellowship of the church in the former part of the year 1763. I may say, without hesitation, and without fear of being contradicted by any who knew her, that she has, on the whole, ever since that time, conducted herself in a manner worthy of her profession.

It is a circumstance less material, but perhaps worthy of being mentioned, that the simplicity and

pleasure to me to reflect, that when my dear wife and her mother had been absent from each other more than eight years, they should both die at the same time. Not only, as neither of them lived to feel the shock which would naturally be occasioned by hearing of the other's death; but as I believe their happy spirits would meet in Paradise, nearly as soon as they arrived there. And it is a further consolation to my mind that it pleased a gracious God to make me the instrument of the conversion of them both.

apparent integrity, with which she delivered an account of her experience to the church, was much taken notice of; and the solemn, steady, modest, and prudent manner, in which she behaved at the time of her baptism did her much honour. She was then only in the nineteenth year of her age; but her conduct was like that of a mother in Israel; though she herself seemed insensible of it. This raised her reputation both in the church and in the world, (for there were many spectators), and was talked of for a considerable time afterwards.

After her admission into the church, in the latter part of the year 1763, my intimacy with her commenced; and the conclusion of the next year we were united in the conjugal relation. On the recollection of this event, I have great reason to give thanks to God, and doubt not but I shall have reason to do so for ever.

Before her marriage, her constitution was delicate and feeble, but during the space of eighteen years after her marriage, it was remarkably strong and healthful. Few women have enjoyed better health and spirits, under the fatigues of a numerous family.* In the year 1783, however, at the birth of her eleventh child, her constitution received a wound from which she was never recovered; and her strength of body and vigour of mind began to be

* Mrs. Taylor had thirteen children. Four are dead, and nine living.

visibly impaired. After this time, she had always a complaint of weakness in her lower parts. Our removal to London in 1785, was neither expected nor desired. But I have generally thought, and still think, that this remove was under the merciful direction of Providence with respect to her, as by being removed to a warmer situation, where she had less fatigue, her life has been, if not prolonged, yet made more comfortable, than it would have been in the country.

Mrs. Taylor had twins at two births; one of which was the last, in 1785, a few weeks before our removal to London. At this time, she was so brought down that her recovery was scarcely expected. But she bore her journey admirably well, and, notwithstanding the fatigue of it, on her arrival at London, her spirits appeared to be invigorated, and her health improved. After this, she continued to enjoy, for more than five years, as good a state of health as could reasonably be expected.

On the first day of September, in 1790, our eldest daughter was seized with a violent fever; which went through all the family then at home, except myself, who through divine mercy, happily escaped. This raging disorder seized my dear wife on the second of October, and brought her so low, that, for some time, there was little hope of her recovery. But she and all my family were recovered by the blessing of God, which wonderfully attended the indefatigable endeavours of an eminent physi-

cian,* to whom I am indebted, beyond what I can easily express, for his kind and incessant attention to my family on that, and on all other occasions, whenever his attention has been requisite.

On Mrs. Taylor's recovery from the fever, we had, for a few days, flattering expectations that her health would, in a good measure, be re-established. But these expectations were soon checked; for stepping out, and taking a walk in the garden, on a pleasant evening, the sight of one eye was entirely taken away in a moment, without any apparent cause, or painful sensation whatever. By various means used for the purpose, the sight was, in a small degree, restored; but the other eye immediately began to grow dim, and very soon, both were rendered almost useless. Though many means were used, we could not perceive that they were, in the least, effectual. So that during the last three years of her life, she has been almost blind, and her whole frame has appeared to be gradually declining. About eleven months before her death, she had a slight paralytic stroke, from which she was in some measure recovered, but the effects continued to such a degree, as to render it necessary to attend and assist her as a child. In this state she remained till the

* Dr. John Whitehead, Physician of the London Dispensary, whose name I wish always to mention with the most unfeigned esteem and gratitude; and to whom I think myself happy in publicly acknowledging my obligations.

twenty-second of October, in the present year 1793. Having been all that day as well as usual, at seven o'clock in the evening she had another stroke, similar to the former, which instantly deprived her of sight, speech, and every degree of sensibility. In this state she continued about six hours, sinking gradually under the weight of her disorder, and then departed this life, I am persuaded, to the "rest which remains for the people of God."

I do not pretend that this short and simple account of the partner of my life, can be very interesting to any. It may possibly afford a little pleasing amusement to her many friends in the country. An apprehension that it may, has induced me to permit the publication of it. You may possibly regard it as one of my foibles, or think it the effusion of the affectionate heart of a weak man. If you can go thus far, it is all the indulgence I request. My next will contain a short description of my departed wife's character, so far as I am able to form a judgment of it, from an intimacy of the closest kind, continued for thirty years. That you and I may be ready to die when the hour commences, is the prayer of

Your affectionate Brother,

and ready Servant,

D. TAYLOR.

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

I Now attempt to give you a short account of the idea which I have formed of the religious and moral character of my late departed wife. A character, which, if I mistake not, is worthy of observation, and the principal parts of it, worthy of imitation. But I only wish it to be received, as I think it ought, as the character of a good Christian, who neither was, nor ever pretended to be, free from imperfections. I sincerely wish that all who read it, may endeavour to equal and to excel the person described, in all that was truly valuable and praiseworthy.

Her worthy parents took care of her education, so far as to preserve her from outward immoralities in her conduct, to make her acquainted with the Bible, and to give her a general notion of the outlines of Christianity. Her younger years, therefore, so far as I have been able to learn, were free from every thing indecent, or inconsistent with what is on all hands allowed to be a commendable behaviour. But I cannot find that, during the first seventeen years of her life, she had any knowledge of the necessity or value of salvation by Jesus Christ.

At that time, as mentioned above, by the blessing of God on the word preached, she was brought to a knowledge of her fallen state, and of the imperfection of her own righteousness; and was stripped of that vain confidence in her own supposed good works, which we are all, by nature, too propense to indulge. Of this her conviction appeared to increase, as long as she lived. I have known few, within the circle of my acquaintance, who more completely answered to the character intended by the appellation which some have given to a certain class of men, whom they have called *Free-grace General Baptists*.

She was not one of your talkative and noisy people, on any occasion; nor did she ever study elegance of style on any subject. Perhaps she rather indulged a reserve in conversation, and vulgarity of style to excess. This might be, in part, owing to the place and mode of her education; and, in part, it might arise from her inveterate abhorrence of any thing that looked like affectation.

During her profession of religion, she had her share of trials, with the rest of her Christian friends. But, so far as I can recollect, she never lost sight of Christ, as a complete Saviour to every believing sinner; nor of her own interest in him, as her Saviour. Her knowledge of the plan of redemption was superior to what is commonly found among professors. On this, I have reason to believe, that her thoughts were much employed,
and

and that she improved her knowledge of it, between God and her own soul, for the preservation and promotion of her comfort and holiness.

None could be a greater friend to the honour of Divine grace, and to the doctrine of free salvation, through faith in the blessed Redeemer. Yet I do not know any who are, or have been, more attentive to the interests of holiness, or more sincerely concerned to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

Her thoughtful and deliberate manner of proceeding, in all the affairs of life, and the several parts of duty, so long as her vigour of mind remained, was very observable, made it very easy to repose an entire confidence in her, and rendered her a very valuable associate. By this deliberation, her reserved disposition, indulged possibly in some instances to an extreme, was abundantly compensated. The propriety of her observations, however plain, and apparently simple, was generally evident and striking, whether on religious or common subjects. This particularly applies to her observations in church meetings, in which all women gave their opinion, if they chose, as well as the men; to her remarks on sermons; to subjects in divinity, introduced in familiar conversation, and to the remarks which she not unfrequently made on controversial subjects.

I think it may not be improper here to explain a hint just now given, for the sake of some who may

not

not sufficiently understand it; and of others, whom it may concern in a different view. The church in the country, of which she was a member, had, as some others have, besides their public worship, two other kinds of stated meetings. One of these was weekly. The church was divided into several branches, which met together once a week, for prayer and mutual edification, by conversing on experimental and practical subjects. The other was designed for the preservation of order, discipline, and purity in the church, generally called church-meetings, and less frequent than the former. In both, the women were encouraged to speak freely, on every subject, as well as the men. Mrs. Taylor was seldom absent from either, notwithstanding her numerous family. She generally spoke in her turn, with freedom, on any subject whatever; and it was very observable, and frequently observed, that, though she thought with great simplicity, and expressed herself in a very plain and familiar manner, yet her observations were so well digested, so pertinent, and accompanied with such reasons, that it was neither common nor easy to make any material objections against them.

Mrs. Taylor was steady, regular, and conscientious, in her attention to divine ordinances, and every part of religious worship. The blessed word of God was dear to her. She read it daily, and gave proof that she read it with attention. During the last three years of her life, when her sight was

was almost taken from her, one of her greatest afflictions appeared to be her inability to read the scriptures. Her readiness in quoting scripture, on proper occasions, sufficiently evinced to those who were intimate with her, that she made it the "man of her counsel," and took pains that it might "dwell in her richly in all wisdom." I have often observed with pleasure, and not without wonder, during the last year of her life, when her recollection was so nearly gone, and all her powers, both of body and mind, were reduced so exceedingly low, with what exactness she could rectify the mistakes of her children, in reading the Bible.

In attending *public* worship, she was very regular. She did not talk, like too many, of *attending when convenient*. She took pains to *make* it convenient. She detested, as every Christian ought to do, the practice of omitting divine worship to oblige her friends, who came to see her, or for any secular purpose, whether of emolument, friendship, or recreation. In two rules, which we laid down for ourselves, respecting this part of our conduct, and from which I believe I may say we never varied, she entirely concurred with me. One was, never to encourage any to visit us on a Lord's day, who would not go, at the proper hour, to public worship; and never, in common cases, to omit, or suffer any of the family to omit, divine worship, to oblige any friend whatever. The other was, never to dress any victuals on a Lord's day, nor to suffer

suffer them to be dressed for our use, either within doors, or without, unless in some particular unforeseen emergencies, whereby any person, whether child or servant, of our own family, or any other, might be prevented attending the house of God, at the stated hours of public worship.

Our Lord's day public worship, both in town and country, has constantly been three times a day; and I do not remember one instance, in the course of twenty-nine years, in which she deviated, or suffered any of her family, whether child or servant, to deviate from the rule mentioned above. She was so far from approving the too common practice of keeping servants at home on Lord's days, to gratify the appetites of their masters and mistresses, that she considered it her duty to contrive, and deny herself, in order that they might be at liberty to attend divine worship on that day, as well as herself.

I believe I may say, without hesitation, that she never was absent from the Lord's supper, when she was able to attend it, unless some other duty which appeared to her, at that time, incumbent upon her, and could not be postponed, required her attention. She by no means approved of that absurd fancy, which prevails in too many weak minds, that persons may justly be absent from the Lord's table, because some are there of whom they think unfavourably. She knew it was her duty to observe the commands of her dying Saviour, and to enjoy the favours which he had conferred upon her, whatever

ever was the temper or the conduct of others, who might have communion with her in them. She well knew that there are other methods to be used with such as *walk disorderly*, and with those who *give and take offences*, than trifling with the blood and ordinances of the glorious Redeemer. She very well knew that when our blessed Saviour gave that kind direction to his disciples, "This do in remembrance of me," he gave it without the least exception, as to the state or sentiments of those who may partake with us of that sacred ordinance: and that though no carnal or disorderly person ought to be admitted to the Lord's table; yet if such be admitted, the guilt and condemnation will fall on the minister, or on the church, as a collective body, rather than on any individual who performs his own duty, and enjoys his own privileges by partaking with them.

I have no reason to doubt that my late dear companion was as sincere, conscientious, and regular in private as in public devotions. I have good reason to believe she was, having often been a witness of her attention to them; I am well persuaded that it was her endeavour to be "in the fear of the Lord" all the day long."

Her general behaviour was such as gave all reasonable evidence of the integrity of her heart, and made it as clearly manifest as a tree is known by its fruits, that she had "known the grace of God in truth;" even that grace which teaches all the real possessors of it, "that denying ungodliness and
"worldly

“worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” Her circumstances in life, and relation to her numerous family, required that she should be more retired from the world than many are; and her natural temper was, in this respect, adapted to her situation. She maintained a conscientious and habitual regard to the duties of religion and domestic life; and considered other things, as, in a great degree, to her, matters of indifference. Her friends, however, were numerous, so that her conduct was well known, and observed by many. Had it been unjustifiable, it must have been discovered. But nothing of this kind was ever heard of. Her family was, for many years, numerous, her acquaintance extensive, and her visitants not a few; and I have no hesitation in appealing to them all, Whether in all the solid and important parts of duty, her general behaviour was not worthy of imitation.

I may venture to say that she took delight in doing good, though with caution and discretion. Her natural temper, indeed, was not eminently susceptible of sympathetic impressions. But this disadvantage, if it be esteemed such, was abundantly compensated two ways.—She was less frequently imposed upon by canting hypocritical professors, who could tell a mournful tale about their necessities and miseries, and put on the appearance of religion, in order to procure a hearing. By these her less-cautious husband, was not unfrequently deceived.

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especially

especially in his younger days ; and would have been deceived oftener, had not her prudence been a preservative to him. At the same time she was conscientious in this duty, when there appeared a real call to it. This is a more valuable quality than an irregular torrent of ungoverned commiseration ; and in her conduct, abundantly supplied the want of it. So that objects of real necessity were not injured, but rather advantaged by her caution ; as, in this way, she had it in her power to give more frequently and more liberally to those who were in real necessity, and who would make a proper use of it.

I have long thought her one of the best judges of useful preaching. She did not pretend to much understanding of style and composition. Yet sometimes her observations on the speech and address of a preacher were such as deserved attention. She, however, paid much more regard to the *matter* and *tendency* of a sermon. Far from being ignorant of the doctrines of the gospel, or of the controversies of the time, she could give a scriptural reason of her faith and practice, better than most common professors, whether male or female. But the chief test by which she tried the sermons she heard was their *practical tendency*. If a preacher did not *come home*, as she used to express it, well turned periods, and elegant style gave her very little satisfaction. She evidently wished her own conscience to be searched, as in the sight of God ; and desired to see the worst
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of herself. When she heard a young preacher who did not reduce his doctrines to practical purposes, and address the hearts of his hearers with freedom, she scrupled not to foretel that "he would never be useful, unless he changed his method of preaching." She frequently ventured to predict the fate and success of young ministers, when she had tried their manner of preaching by this test; and I have observed, and do observe to this day, that her predictions of this kind, are strikingly fulfilled. When she saw a preacher stand up merely to *talk about* his subject, she had no patience with him. But when she heard a young man address a solemn message to his hearers, and expostulate with their consciences on the importance of it, she was highly delighted. That this is the scriptural method of addressing mankind, on religious subjects, must, I apprehend, appear with the fullest evidence to every attentive reader; and that it is the method which God has peculiarly owned and blessed, for the conversion of sinners, and the regular edification of believers is manifest from ecclesiastical history, and universal observation. An address of this kind, therefore, she always esteemed as a token for good in young preachers. I may here add that both her situation and connections in the country, afforded her an opportunity of hearing young preachers, more frequently than in London; and her observations upon their discourses, were made with freedom, and, though plain and simple, were generally very improving. I can, however-

say with truth, that I myself have not unfrequently received improvement from them.

As a wife, a parent, and mistress of a family, she had many excellencies. She had not, it must be acknowledged, the happiest and tenderest address. But she sufficiently manifested a sincere desire for the present and future welfare of all with whom she was connected. Her unremitted and indefatigable attention to domestic duties was evident to all who were acquainted with her. She could never bear to indulge or gratify herself at the expence of the ease and comfort of others. She rather laboured too much, and directed others too little. While her health and strength continued, she was remarkable in going through family business with propriety and dispatch; and was therefore less employed than a mistress of a numerous family ought to be, in directing and instructing her dependents. I have generally esteemed it one of the principal defects of her valuable character, that she was not sufficiently patient and laborious in giving instructions to her children and servants, and correcting their mistakes. She too frequently took more of the laborious part of their business upon herself than she ought, rather than have the trouble of teaching *them* how she would have it done, and taking care that they performed it according to her directions. This was injurious, both to herself and to them.—To herself, as it occasioned her more fatigue than was proper, and to them, as it prevented their improvement.

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Her aversion to the exercise of authority was much too strong for a person at the head of a large family. Her natural disposition being very familiar and condescending, was too much indulged in this respect; and the regard which was due to one in her situation, was, on that account, too much diminished. This sometimes occasioned domestic inconveniences; and I mention it, chiefly, that I may take the opportunity of recommending it to rising families, especially to her own dear surviving offspring, eight of whom are females, that when they come to fill similar stations, they would habituate themselves to govern, and to exercise proper authority, with mildness and affection, and to condescend with a proper degree of dignity.

I make no scruple, however to affirm, that, on the whole, whether considered as a wife, a friend, a parent, or a mistress, she had many valuable qualities; and if she did not possess all the *splendid*, she had not a few of the *solid* accomplishments of a most valuable associate. Her surviving husband has great reason to "praise her;" and her children to "rise up, and call her blessed."* They all have reason to be very thankful for the advantages which they have derived, or might have derived from her prudent maxims, good advice, and holy example.

Her confidence in the word and promises of God was very considerable; especially in the latter years

* Prov. xxxi. 28.

of her life. I do not remember that she ever appeared to fear any thing in the way of duty; or omitted any thing to which she thought she ought to attend, for fear of consequences. The difficulties she encountered, in the first years of her profession of religion, with various trying circumstances in subsequent years, might be mentioned to shew that her confidence in God was, in a good degree, steady and uniform. Though the brevity of my design forbids me to enlarge, I think you will allow me to give one or two instances, which appear to me sufficient, however they may appear to another. When I was unexpectedly invited and advised to remove to London, it is natural to suppose that the hazard of such a remove, with such a family; and the disadvantages that might attend it, would forcibly strike an attentive mind: especially as we should leave a very pleasant situation, admirably suited to the state of our family, and very agreeable connections in the country; and as Mrs. Taylor was coming, at that time of life, among persons to whom she was entirely a stranger, and leaving every relative and friend (her husband and children excepted) behind her. The propriety of such a removal was referred, for twelve months, to the consideration of all the ministers in our connection, to be determined at their annual association, in 1785. During this year, while the matter was in discussion, her friends argued against her compliance, from the considerations just mentioned. Unacquainted with London,
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and unable to judge in the case, as she confessed she was, with a calmness and steadiness of mind, remarked by her friends to her commendation afterwards, she repulsed all arguments with this reply, that, "Wherever her husband should think it his duty to go, she thought it her duty to submit, and go with him." On this ground she continued composed and easy, during the twelve months mentioned above; and when it was declared to be the unanimous judgment of the ministers in the association, that the interest of religion, circumstanced as things then were, required our removal to London, she ventured upon it, as well as upon the journey, weak as she was, without demur or hesitation. The other instance I mention was, some months before her death, when, in a very weak state, I had assisted her in lying down in bed, her strength nearly exhausted, she panted for some time before she was able to speak: being a little recovered, she says, with an energy which shewed that she spake from her heart, 'O! this is hard work; but "this God is our God, for ever and ever, and will be our guide even unto death." This appeared to be one of her favourite passages; but I may say with truth, that "the word of Christ dwelt in her richly;" and her confidence, in trying circumstances, appeared to be, in an eminent degree, uniform and unwavering.

To the end of life, when her mental powers appeared in any measure capable of recollection, I
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frequently enquired how her mind was? Whether her evidence was clear? Whether her confidence was steady? Whether she could depend upon her Almighty Friend and Father? and so on. To which she always answered in the affirmative. So that I am not only well persuaded of the safety of her state, but also that she enjoyed all the solid peace and satisfaction of which, in the course of nature, her disordered mind was capable. Reflection on this rich grace of God to my dear deceased companion, will, I trust, ever produce consolation in my own mind, and engage me, with all the powers of my soul, to bow at his awful feet, and to ascribe glory and praise to his adorable name for ever and ever.

You will naturally observe, Sir, I do not pretend that my late dear wife's character was *without defects*. I would not be understood to have any such intention. On no occasion am I fond of the marvellous. It has seldom any real foundation in truth. I know the weakness of human nature; and have therefore frankly acknowledged that, in some things I thought her defective. Nor can it be reasonably imagined that I have mentioned either all her defects, or all her excellencies. My design was only to lay before her children and friends some of the principal of those valuable qualities, which she, by the grace of God, possessed and cultivated; and which rendered her a good member of sacred and civil society, in the several relations

relations in which Divine Providence had placed her: praying that, by the same grace, whatever was excellent in her character, may be imitated by all her numerous friends and relatives, especially by her children.

Perfect freedom from all imperfections is not the privilege of fallen man, in this sinful world, surrounded as we are, with enemies and pollutions on every side. We thought it necessary, in our first correspondence, to remind one another that neither of us was about to marry an angel, but an imperfect creature in flesh and blood: and we both had frequent occasion to recollect, and to acknowledge it afterwards. But I have sufficient evidence that she desired, prayed, and endeavoured, by Divine assistance, to "cleanse herself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God."

How far it will be thought consistent with propriety and delicacy to drop one word concerning myself, I cannot say. Allow me, however, to presume so far upon your candour as to observe, that on the most deliberate and impartial recollection of which I think myself capable, I am not conscious of one day having passed since we were united together, in which it has not been my wish and design to make my departed wife as happy as possible. But in the *execution* of this design, I acknowledge there have been many imperfections. On a survey of twenty-nine years, I am deeply
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convinced, and desire to live and die under the humbling conviction, that, though I deliberately class her among the best of wives, yet she would certainly have been a better wife, if she had had a better husband.

That you and I may always live in the prospect of death and eternal glory, that we may be daily humbled before God on account of our unworthiness, always "rejoicing only in Christ Jesus," while we "have no confidence in the flesh," yet "worshipping God in the spirit;" that we may constantly grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in obedience to his will, and conformity to his example; that we may fill every station in which we are placed, with comfort to ourselves, advantage to mankind, and to the honour of Him who hath loved us, and died for us; and at last, appear in his presence, and before his throne with exceeding joy, is the prayer of,

Sir,

Your affectionate Brother

in the precious Gospel,

Union Street,

Bishopsgate Street,

Nov. 1, 1793.

D. TAYLOR.



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